State/Union Territory Governments for the development of Domestic Tourism.

(e) and (f). The private sector is already involved in the development of tourism infrastructure for domestic tourism.

[English]

Allocation of Wheat and Rice

1865. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem appearing in 'Indian Express' dated 18 March, 1996 that States like Bengal, Maharashtra, etc. were starving of their allotted quota of wheat and rice resulting in hardhitting suffering to the poorer sections of the population who draw their sustenance from Public Distribution System while nation's granaries in Punjab and Haryana were overflowing;

(b) the facts thereof, and the names of all the officers of Food Corporation of India responsible for such an acute shortage of essential supplies in various parts of the country; and

(c) the action taken by the Government against these officials?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (c). The newsitem appeared in the Indian Express dated 18.3.1996 was seen by the Government. As the stocks of foodgrains in the Central Pool continued to be comfortable, there had been no difficulty in supplying wheat and rice to the States/UTs including West Bengal, Maharashtra etc. for PDS during 95-96. The average monthly offtake of rice and wheat for PDS/RPDS in West Bengal and Maharashtra in year 1995-96 was as under :

(In lakh tonnes)

State	Rice	Wheat	Total
West Bengal	0.37	0.70	1.07
Maharashtra	0.30	0.51	0.81
All India	7.88	4.41	12.29

As against the lifting of rice and wheat indicated above, the stocks held by FCI on different dates were as under :

(In lakh tonnes)

	West Bengal		Maharashtra		All India (Central Pool)	
Date	Rice	Wheat	Rice	Wheat	Rice	Wheat
1.4.95	3.61	0.96	8.04	5.82	180.0	87.2
1.10.95	3.81	1.16	6.51	4.57	130.0	169.5
1.1.96	3.45	0.52	5.46	3.23	154.0	131.5
1.2.96	3.76	0.63	5.35	3.01	160.8	114.9
1.3.96	3.73	0.74	5.48	2.83	161.8	99.4
1.4.96	3.41	0.72	5.32	2.85	141.4	86.0
1.5.96	3.14	0.87	5.38	2.76	137.4	122.4
1.6.96	2.95	1.13	5.02	2.66	135.4	152.3

(All Figures Provisional)

The stocks of rice and wheat in the country stood higher than the requirements for PDS. The same position generally prevailed in Maharashtra and West Bengal. However in January, 96 and February, 1996 the stock of wheat in West Bengal on the first day of the month was a little lower than the average monthly offtake in the state. There were some movement constraints affecting the stock position during a few months after September, 1995 in the Mumbai City and Calcutta Metropolitan Areas. This was mainly due to lesser availability of railway rakes due to heavy passenger traffic in Mumbai Areas and difficulty on the part of Calcutta Port Trust to accept rakes from the Eastern Railways for placement at Jinjra Pool (JJP) godown of FCI in Calcutta Port Trust Area. The situation has improved since then.

In the aforesaid context, there seems to be no scope for fixing responsibility on any FCI officers.

Tourism Offices Abroad

1866. SHRI SARAT PATTANAYAK : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the number of offices abroad operating for the promotion of tourism;

(b) whether any review has been made by the Government regarding the performance of these offices; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) There are 18 Govt. of India Tourist offices operating abroad for promotion of Tourism in India.

(b) and (c). The performance of the Tourist offices abroad is being appraised from time to time with a view to ensuring that they work efficiently and effectively. The review of the performance of the offices is a continuing process.

Benefits to Poor People

1867. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA :
SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH :

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have formulated any scheme to strengthen the public distribution system;

(b) if so, the details of the items likely to be sold under this system to the poor people in rural areas at half the market price;

(c) whether the Government propose to make available more items like tea leaf, soap, pulses, iodised salt and Janta cloth under the public distribution system; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) :

(a) and (b). The Government proposes to streamline the Public Distribution System (PDS) with its focus on the poor. The details are being worked out in consultation with the State Governments/UT Administrations

(c) and (d) No, Sir. However States/UTs are reported to be distributing items like tea, pulses, iodised salt etc. through Public Distribution System according to local needs and preferences

Distribution of Essential Commodities

1868. SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN :
SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA :
SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA :
SHRI HARIN PATHAK :

Will the Minister of of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) the norms fixed for per unit distribution of essential commodities like wheat, rice, sugar and edible oil in rural and urban areas under the public distribution system;

(b) whether there is any disparity regarding distribution of essential commodities in rural and urban areas;

(c) if so, the details thereof, commodity-wise alongwith the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to remove the disparity?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (d). The norms fixed for per unit distribution of essential commodities like wheat, rice and edible oil for rural and urban areas are decided by the States/UTs themselves as part of their operational responsibility. For Sugar the allocation to States are being made at the rate of 425 gm. per head per month based on the 1991 census figures. The sale of issue of the commodities may vary from State to State and within a State depending on local needs and conditions. In case there is any disparity regarding distribution of essential commodities, it is for the State Government/UT Administrations to remove the same.

Workers in Marble Mines

1869. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the approximate number of workers engaged in the marble mining in Rajasthan;

(b) whether the Government propose to bring some legislation for providing higher amount of wages and creating better working conditions for them; and

(c) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) There are about 14,109 workers employed in Marble Mines in Rajasthan.

(b) No, Sir. The wages and working conditions of the workers employed in Marble Mines are governed by the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 and other relevant labour laws.

(c) Does not arise

New Telephone Exchanges in Kerala

1870. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether all the telephone exchanges proposed for 1995-96 in Kerala have started functioning;

(b) if not, the reason therefor, and

(c) the names of district where the exchanges have not yet started functioning?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b) Out of 53 Telephone